Baltimore Model Schools Initiative: Year 1 Results

September 2005

The New Teacher Project
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Agenda

- Baltimore Model Schools Initiative Background
- Year 1 Goals and Results
- Looking Ahead
The Baltimore Model Schools Initiative (BMSI) was created as a partnership of several agencies and organizations.
With the goal of improved teacher quality, the Baltimore Model Schools Initiative relies on a comprehensive approach to school staffing.

Three Strategies for Earlier, More Effective School Staffing

1. Build an applicant pool of high-quality candidates (through BCPSS)
2. Eliminate or minimize policy barriers that impede early, efficient hiring and placement
3. Build capacity of school-based staff to hire teachers early and selectively
In its first year, BMSI involved 20 of Baltimore's lowest-performing schools.

- Participating schools, which were chosen based on restructuring status, include:
  - 3 high schools (Banks, Douglass, Patterson)
  - 5 middle schools (Diggs-Johnson, Franklin, Hamilton, Lemmel, Roland Patterson)
  - 3 K-8 schools (Guilford, Hazelwood, Westport)
  - 9 elementary schools (Beechfield, Belmont, Brent, Edgewood, General Wolfe, Johnston Square, Rodman, Tilghman, Yorkwood)

- While the staffing challenges faced by these schools are not unique to this set of schools, BMSI represents a commitment on the part of the district to helping this particular set of schools overcome barriers to staffing.

- Using the successes of and lessons learned through this targeted initiative, TNTP and BCPSS are positioned to begin replicating the successes of these schools throughout the district.
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Year One Goals

Staffing Timeline: Move up the hiring timeline for 20 of Baltimore's lowest performing schools in order to ensure that these schools are staffed with the highest quality teachers possible.

Hiring Opportunities: Increase the number of group and individual opportunities to hire teachers for these schools.

Barrier Removal: Identify and alleviate barriers to hiring from union contract provisions or internal BCPSS processes.

Building principal capacity: Train principals on successful strategies to fill vacancies in a timely and effective fashion with the best possible new teacher candidates.

New Teacher Experience: Evaluate hiring experience of new teachers and make recommendations about this process.

New Teacher Quality: Increase principal accountability for hiring high-quality teachers and survey principals about the relative quality of the teachers hired through the BMSI efforts.
Staffing timeline improvements meant that BMSI schools opened with only two teacher vacancies.

- All vacancies identified before August 22 (one week before school started for students) were filled.
- All but two of the 13 vacancies identified during the week of August 22 were filled.
  - BMSI schools opened with only 1 special education vacancy and 1 early childhood vacancy (which were identified on August 24)
  - In comparison, a total of approximately 130 vacancies remained unfilled in all other Baltimore schools at the start of the 2005-6 school year.
- Nearly 150 new teachers were hired to BMSI schools for the 2005-2006 school year. In addition, 23 incumbent teachers were transferred to BMSI schools; principals selected approximately half of these transfers. In total, these teachers include:
  - 32 special education teachers
  - 16 math teachers
  - 13 science teachers
In order to achieve BMSI's staffing timeline goals, we set and met benchmark hiring dates for new hires.

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<tr>
<th>Staffing Goal</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ 30% of vacancies identified by April 15 will be staffed by May 17</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>No vacancies were identified before April 15.</td>
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<td>➢ 60% of vacancies identified by May 1 will be staffed by June 1</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td></td>
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<td>➢ 100% of vacancies identified by June 15 will be staffed by July 15</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>3 of the remaining 4 vacancies were filled the following week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ 100% of vacancies identified by one week before school starts will be staffed by the first day of school for students</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>45 teachers were hired between July 16 and August 29.</td>
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BMSI increased the number of hiring opportunities for principals by offering new technological tools and placement fair support.

- BCPSS held 3 placement fairs (early May, early June, early July), with logistical and planning assistance from TNTP. In comparison, BCPSS held one job fair during the 04-05 hiring season.

- TNTP worked with BCPSS to fine-tune and improve their approach to job fairs with forms, planning, and other logistical and technical assistance and resources (see example to right).

- BMSI schools had advantage of using online interview scheduling technology to set up interviews at designated times at their schools.

- BMSI project staff initiated recruitment activities when candidate pool began to dwindle.
BMSI worked with HR and school principals to begin reducing or eliminating hiring barriers.

- Worked with Human Resources staff to allow principals to hire before initial budget allocations were released.
- BMSI program staff coordinated with staffing specialists in order to resolve principal concerns and questions about hiring.
- Designed forms for HR to use with candidates to expedite their placement at a school.
- Enhanced communications with principals overall and worked to improve the new hire and transfer confirmation process in particular.
BMSI built the capacity of principals and school staffs to make better hiring decisions through a series of trainings.

- BMSI held three meetings for principals on securing the best possible candidates by making timely and effective hiring decisions:
  
  1. **Introduction to BMSI** and sharing of *Missed Opportunities* findings in order to create an urgency around early hiring;
  
  2. **Training on school-based selection model** in order to help principals identify and select high-quality teachers; and
  
  3. **Training on cultivation of new hires** in order to ensure that the new teachers schools have selected begin teaching on the first day of school.

- BMSI program staff conducted site visits to all schools in order to better understand the unique needs and attributes of each school and to provide a structured check-in time with principals on their staffing progress.

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<th>Building Principal Capacity Goal</th>
<th>Actual</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75% of principals surveyed will report that training provided by BMSI was “high quality” or “very high quality” and indicate that time was well spent.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
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We are working with an external evaluator to assess progress on two additional goals.

### NEW TEACHER QUALITY

Principals will be surveyed by the research team from Johns Hopkins University to evaluate this measure. Among other things, this team will assess:

- Principals' satisfaction with BMSI teachers' effectiveness as compared to other teachers
- Principals' willingness to hire BMSI teachers again

This team will also examine applicant characteristics that have been shown to affect student achievement, such as:

- Undergraduate GPA
- Coursework in content area
- Significant education coursework

### NEW TEACHER SATISFACTION

Research team from Johns Hopkins University is surveying new teachers to evaluate this measure. Among the areas being assessed are new teachers' opinions on:

- Customer service and responsiveness from the HR department (and from the BMSI program)
- Hiring timelines
- Satisfaction with the hiring and placement process
- Satisfaction with teaching assignment
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With this successful first year as context, we are positioned to meet similarly aggressive goals for Year 2 of this project.

**Staffing Timeline:** Continue to move up the hiring timeline for 20 of Baltimore’s lowest performing schools. We will set aggressive timeline benchmarks for staffing to ensure that these schools are staffed with the highest quality teachers possible as early as possible.

**Hiring Opportunities:** Work with the Human Resources Department to continue increasing the number of hiring opportunities available to principals.

**Barrier Removal:** District HR staff will implement at least 3 strategies to positively impact the hiring timeline and process.

**Building principal capacity:** Train principals on effective vacancy projection, a high-quality selection model, and tools to cultivate strong teacher candidates.

**New Teacher Experience:** Analyze results of the new teacher survey and work with BCPSS to implement strategies based on these results.

**New Teacher Quality:** Work with BCPSS to implement at least 1 additional strategy to increase principal accountability for hiring of high-quality teachers.
We are also leveraging this success for greater impact throughout the entire District by replicating effective strategies.

**Technology solutions:** Implement technology solutions, including an online applicant tracking system, to allow real-time, data-driven recruitment and selection decision-making that will help to streamline the processing of teachers once hired by the district.

**Staffing timeline changes:** Bring the knowledge and experience gained from the pilot schools during the 05-06 staffing season to the wider district staffing goals. Advocate for and support the district in making key changes to the timeline to increase its ability to hire high-quality teachers earlier in the year.

**Focus on high-quality teachers throughout staffing season:** Work with the Human Resources and CAO’s offices to address barriers revealed through our work with the model schools (e.g., late budget release dates, communication issues between principals and district office staff, and a limited number of hiring opportunities) on a system-wide level.

**Budget forecasting improvements:** Leverage TNTP knowledge and experience to implement/suggest strategies in the process through which school budgets are forecast and created, and ultimately used by District staff and principals.